

Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. today praised Governor Blagojevich and Transportation Secretary Tim Martin for bringing together Will County officials and the Abraham Lincoln National Airport Commission (ALNAC) to discuss governance issues for the airport.

"The Governor and Secretary Martin have provided strong leadership at a critical time. They brought Will County officials to the table with the Abraham Lincoln Airport Commission to discuss how all parties can work together to move this vital project forward," Jackson said.

"Secretary Martin was firm and clear today. He stated that IDOT plans to submit the master plan proposed by ALNAC to the FAA for federal approval this spring for two reasons. One, ALNAC has put together a fantastic plan and it is the only group with financing. Two, because further delays would only add unnecessary cost and time to the project that is vitally important to Illinois's economic future," Jackson said.

As for governance, the Congressman said: "Our offer remains on the table in terms of Will County's participation. We want Will County on board and we urge the Governor to appoint Will County Executive Larry Walsh to serve on the airport's executive board. We are prepared to give Will County ample time to consider the offer.

"In the meantime, the Abraham Lincoln Airport Commission will continue to work closely with IDOT to complete the final details of the airport master plan so that the State can submit the plan to the FAA for approval as soon as possible," Jackson said.

The Jackson plan would use private financing -- not tax dollars -- to build the five-gate one-runway airport near University Park. The airport would be run by a public commission that is composed of 32 communities, most of which are located near the airport.